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# SCIENCE

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## *FORTY YEARS' FLUCTUATIONS IN MATHEMATICAL RESEARCH*[1]

IN the year 1870 was published the first volume of the *Jahrbuch über die Fortschritte der Mathematik*, a new venture in the mathematical world. It was intended to relieve students and investigators from the necessity of searching through all available recent books and serials in the quest of any particular topic, or in the effort to keep posted on the discoveries of current interest. Similar attempts have been made, both before and since 1870, in other fields of science; and their effect and influence have been so marked that even the general reader has now Poole's Index and its successors, attempting in a less minute way the same service for general periodical literature. Under each title of book or article the *Jahrbuch* gives a brief analysis, sometimes a criticism, so that the reader follows up only those articles whose actual content proves important for him.

At the outset the expectation was confidently expressed that the *Jahrbuch* would appear within six months after the close of its year. But serials were slow in reaching the office, there were from twenty to forty referees, and once a printer's strike interposed for half a year; so that three years often elapsed instead of six months. Twice a double volume was issued in the hope of lessening the delay; but it soon fell back, and now our most recent volume covers the year 1909. These voluminous handbooks, now covering forty-two years and occupying eight feet of shelf-room, offer op-

[1] Read before the Vassar Faculty Club, and the Columbia Mathematical Colloquium, February, 1914.